

St. Alban's Episcopal Church
Minutes of the Vestry Meeting
Tuesday, March 17, 2015, 6:30 pm
Nourse Hall

Vestry Officers Present: The Rev. Dr. Deborah A. Meister, Deborah Potter (Senior Warden), Bill Edgar (Junior Warden)

Vestry Members Present: Craig Albright, Mark Edwards, Marcy Fisher, Lauri Fitz-Pegado, Rich Jensen, Marcus King, Sandy Kolb, Ann Morrison, Donna Palmer, Mark Shima, Lin Tate, Jordy VandeBunte, Susana Hair (youth representative).

Staff: Rev. Matthew Hanisian, Rev. Jim Quigley, Rev. Juan Pastor Reyes, Doug Dykstra (director of finance)

Diocesan Delegate: Amanda Hobart

Visitor: Susan Morris (WSA)

Call-to-Order: A meeting of the Vestry was called to order by The Rev. Dr. Deborah Meister at 6:30 pm. Lauri Fitz-Pegado offered the opening prayer. The verse for reflection was John 12: 20-26.

Check-in:

--Craig Albright noted some interest in the Parish Weekend on the part of parents who are new to St. Alban's. Rev. Meister shared the Weekend dates (Sept. 18-20) and location (Claggett Center).

--Vestry members said they heard positive feedback on Rev. Meister's sermon about multiculturalism and change.

--Sandy Kolb said a third of available tickets for the Gala were sold on Sunday.

Approval of the Minutes

Sandy Kolb offered a MOTION, seconded by Lauri Fitz-Pegado, to approve minutes of the Vestry's February 17, 2015 meeting. The MOTION was approved with Marcy Fisher and Ann Morrison abstaining. Lin Tate offered a MOTION, seconded by Rich Jensen, to approve minutes of the Vestry's special March 7 meeting. The MOTION was approved.

Adoption of Consent Agenda

Reports on Internal Communication, Gala, Rev. Quigley, Rev. Hanisian

Ann Morrison offered a MOTION, seconded by Jordy VandeBunte, to adopt the consent agenda.

Deborah Potter noted that more details on the Internal Communication report had been shared by email, detailing plans to change the layout of the Sunday announcement pages. The MOTION carried.

Treasurer's Report

In the absence of treasurer Curt Large, Bill Edgar provided the monthly report, which he described as "very positive." Income was flat to budget. Expenses were below budget. The Endowment was at an all-time high at the end of February, at \$3,459,556. The Reserve Fund is fully funded.

Since the end of the pledge campaign, 36 households have increased their 2015 pledges, adding \$23,000 to the operating budget. Deborah Potter shared information from Doug Dykstra that the church received its first bequest of 2015--an additional \$20,000 from the estate of Peggy Belknap. Of that, \$2,000 goes to the bequest tithe line in the budget, fully funding that line. The remainder goes to the Endowment.

The Finance Committee has asked the Vestry to approve the engagement of Hozik & Company to conduct the annual audit. Rev. Hanisian asked how long the firm has been doing the audit. Mr. Edgar said this would be the seventh year, which is consistent with best practices in the nonprofit sector of engaging the same auditor for up to 20 years. Mark Shima offered a MOTION, seconded by Marcy Fisher, to approve the engagement letter. The MOTION carried.

Junior Warden's Report

Mr. Edgar said the roof is leaking in the Satterlee Hall stairwell leading to the Op Shop. Our regular roofer estimated the cost of repair at \$5300, plus interior plaster repair and painting.

Ann Morrison offered a MOTION seconded by Mark Edwards, to approve up to \$8000 to cover the repairs (to include the interior work), on the understanding that the amount can be amended if more funding is required. The MOTION carried.

Additional work needs to be done to the HVAC system in Satterlee, but that will wait until the crossover from heat to air conditioning.

Mr. Edgar said some parishioners have noticed a smell of gas outside the Rectory. Washington Gas has investigated and determined that the leak is not in a St. Alban's line and poses no safety issues. They are still working to resolve the problem.

Nominating Committee

Chaired by Mr. Edgar, the committee has a partial slate of candidates in place, but still needs two more candidates for Vestry, four for delegate, and ideally one more for Junior Warden. The slate must be approved 60 days before the annual meeting. The Vestry agreed to meet on Saturday, April 28 to consider a final slate.

Strategic Planning

The Vestry discussed whether to engage an outside consultant to assist with future planning, and in particular whether to engage Ray Donnelly, who met with the Vestry earlier in March. Several members said they would normally prefer to interview several consultants, but they were impressed and felt comfortable with Donnelly. The full Vestry will not be involved in every aspect of strategic planning but will be regularly updated by a smaller group.

Ann Morrison offered a MOTION seconded by Donna Palmer to engage Ray Donnelly as consultant for strategic planning. The MOTION carried.

Spanish-Language Congregation Task Force

Lauri Fitz-Pegado summarized the task force recommendations:

- focus on children as a priority, finding synergy with existing programs and bringing in parents
- don't go bilingual immediately and don't replace a current English-language service
- end the 5 p.m. soon, because keeping it won't allow kids to participate nor integrate the adults
- offer a morning service in Spanish, with music
- co-celebrate some feast days with parts of the service in English and Spanish

She said Mr. Hanisian is ready to add teens from the congregation to the ASP mission trip, but not to this year's pilgrimage as they have missed too much of the preparative work.

The congregation would like to bring in Debbie Kirk as a supply priest when Rev. Reyes leaves. They know her and she will be ordained soon. They need to find a musician; Julio's wife might be a possibility.

Donna Palmer commended Lauri Fitz-Pegado for being the driving force with the Spanish Language Service Task Force. She took up the charge in getting members for the task force together to do the work.

One recommendation--that the Vestry set aside a seat for a person from the congregation--was discussed at length. Doing this formally would require amending the Parish by-laws. Ms. Potter noted the precedent of having an unelected, non-voting Vestry member in the youth representative and suggested that could be a way to get representation from the congregation in Vestry meetings. Ms. Fitz-Pegado said that would not make them feel equal, which is very important. Mr. Edgar said he believes that a candidate from the congregation can be elected, and asked the Vestry to work for that. Ms. Morrison agreed that the Vestry needs someone who is bilingual and said that need must be shared with the parish.

Ms. Tate said the recommendations will cost money and she urged the Vestry to commit to that. Rev. Meister said that is what the Vestry did at its last meeting, and noted that the budget includes funds for a supply priest and musician through the end of 2015.

Donna Palmer offered a MOTION seconded by Marcy Fisher that if the Vestry does not have the expertise needed to do its work, the Vestry commits to reaching out to bring in that expertise. The MOTION carried.

Marcy Fisher offered a MOTION seconded by Mark Shima that the Vestry formally receive the task force report and commit to implementing its recommendations. The MOTION carried.

Lin Tate asked Vestry members to look at the report's list of activities that Spanish-speaking congregation members should be involved in and offer to serve as liaisons. Assignments will be made at the April Vestry meeting.

Senior Warden's Report

Deborah Potter asked that all Vestry members complete their review of a list of names that was circulated at the special meeting in an effort to clean up the Parish database. She reported that former Senior Wardens Alex Netchvolodoff and John Daniel Reaves are reviewing the list as well.

On strategic planning, she said she would be involved, along with the Rector and Mr. Edgar, whose term ends in June. Mr. Albright, Ms. Kolb and Mr. Edwards expressed interest. Some non-Vestry members will be involved, as well. The consultant suggested limiting the group to no more than 10.

Rector's Report

Rev. Meister noted a few changes in the Holy Week schedule. Maundy Thursday will be in Satterlee Hall with food and the service. A 6 p.m. service has been added on Good Friday for people who can't come during the three hours from noon to 3 p.m. An Easter sunrise service has been added, to begin at 6 a.m. with the goal of having dawn break as the first Alleluias are said. There will also be a full slate of morning services on Easter.

New Vestments are being acquired through memorial gifts.

Parish administrator Sophie Wilmot has accepted a new job. Her last day will be March 25. Rev. Meister will begin interviews for a replacement tomorrow. In the long run, the hope is to find someone bilingual. Ann Morrison noted that could be more expensive, but is necessary.

Samantha Gottlich has been called as our next seminarian; she will begin in fall 2015.

The search for a part-time director of children's ministries continues.

The St. Alban's Vestry adjourned after a prayer offered by Rich Jensen at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deborah Potter
Acting Secretary